

N. H. Morris

Department of Community Services
NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE

MEMORANDUM

July 31, 1952

TO: Mr. Nelson C. Jackson, Director
Community Services

FROM: Ray. H. Morris, Field Representative

SUBJECT: Continuation of NUL-UDUS Efforts in Trenton,
E. J., Bucks County, Pa.

One principal focus of this trip to Bucks County was the assembling of answers to questions raised by Mr. Moss in his memorandum to us dated July 3, 1952. On the basis of those questions, information is submitted as follows:

The number of houses up and ready for occupancy - Some 250 Levitt houses are in various stages of completion; 85 families had moved in as of July 17, 1952 - 15 more expected by July 24th. At Fairless Hills, some 1,125 houses are "under roof" 1/2 of which are ready for occupancy and about 350 are occupied.

The effect of "the strike" in delaying Levitt's plans - There has been very little effect. The "strike" is only a matter of picketing being done by AFL building trades unions. Levitt had no union contracts - the pickets protest this fact.

Number of persons employed on constructions by Levitt - Some 5,000 construction workers are at Levittown, according to Mr. Laughlin, Bus. Agt. Building and Construction Trade Council, AFL.

Unions involved - There are no unions officially involved at Levittown; Levitt makes no contracts with any union. Construction is being done by many sub-contractors who hire "at-the-job."

Relationship of Negroes - At least 1/4 of the workers seen at Levittown are Negroes. Conversations with several of them indicate a pattern of employment on basis of "what work you ask for" when an applicant comes to the grounds. There is perfunctory qualifying procedure but, so far, it appears that Negroes have not been finding undue difficulty.

Officials of unions at Levittown - Although there are no unions officially at Levittown, if there were, the Building and Construction Trade Council, AFL (713 N. Broad Street, Philadelphia) would have jurisdiction. The Carpenters Union is trying to get recognition at Levittown now. Mr. James Laughlin is Business Manager of the B. & C.T.C. and Mr. O'Briscoll is the Business Manager of the Carpenters Union.

U. S. Steel Company Community Services Office - This office is not yet open and operating, but will be after the nation-wide steel strike is over.

Organizations active in Bucks County - The summer weather seems to have dried up the activity of lay organizations. No new developments were discovered since the setting of the Bucks County Human Relations Council which I attended on a prior trip and reported.

Organizations represented at January and February meetings - Invitations were sent to any and all organizations that any of a dozen individuals thought should attend. The list of persons actually attending could not be secured--due to the vacation of the person who (according to Mrs. E. O. McGruder, Bristol) happens to have it.

Follow-up - There has been no apparent follow-up of the late May meeting. Mr. Melvin Rose is chairman of a committee on housing and expects to get some organizational actions moving shortly.

In-migrant Negroes - There are practically no in-migrant Negroes in the lower Bucks County area - except around Bristol where about 25 to 30 have come in last year.

Negro home purchasers - No Negroes have bought any Levittown or Fairless Hills houses. Only one or two Negro families have moved into owner-occupied dwellings in the area in past several months.

General Situation

Fairless Works: Some 10,000 workers are employed on the construction of Fairless Works. About 50 per cent (or 2,000) of the laborers are Negroes; 50% of carpenters and millwrights are Negroes; 97% of operating engineers are Negroes. All Fairless Works construction is unionized - Philadelphia locals and councils have jurisdiction. The important people for our NUL interest are Mr. James Loughlin, Mr. O'Brien, and Mr. Harry Wagner. Conferences were held with each and a joint investigatory inspection of Fairless Works employment is planned by Mr. Wagner and the NUL-UNAF representative for 7/30/52. This inspection could not be had earlier because of a jurisdictional strike at Fairless Works.

Levittown: Construction is moving ahead uninterrupted. The (Philadelphia) Carpenters Union takes the position that Negroes are cutting their own throats, building houses for Levitt who won't let Negroes live in them. A \$70 a week salary and security of employment are requirements for all Levittown purchasers. Some 350 N.P.'s are working at Levittown. Levitt charged by Building Trades Council officials with horrible labor practices: \$115.00 is paid to a crew of four workers for each (10,000 house built by the crew; it takes 52-56 hours to put up one of the pre-set houses, working from sunrise to sunset.

Fairless Hill: The 400 (proposed) rental houses are not yet begun. Water and sewage disposal problems for development only 10% licked.

Community Activity: Summer weather has apparently delayed further activity of lay organizations. The NUL field representative asked several persons if they would serve on a NUL-UCDS Bucks County Committee, if it is decided that one should be organized. Affirmative answers came from Mr. Alvin Lewis, Dr. and Mrs. E. S. McGruder; further clarification with Mr. Melvin Rose will be needed (Mr. Rose is chairman of a sub-committee of the Bucks County Human Relations Council) and with Mr. Orvick, Principal, Solebury School. Mrs. Pellinsbee was out of town and could not be reached again during this trip. Some twelve persons are being considered for the committee.

During a discussion with Mr. Lewis about the possibility of getting Negroes who are seeking jobs and/or homes in Bucks County, to register with the NUL field representative, Mr. Lewis offered to renovate a building he owns so that desk space might be available in Morrisville.

Comments: With the exception of the on-the-spot investigation planned for July 30 by the NUL field representative and Mr. Harry Wagner of the Carpenters Union and the Trades Council (Philadelphia), activities in lower Bucks County may be left until after the representative's August vacation. The representative placed himself "on call" during August so his contacts in Bucks County would not have to pass up anything important that should involve him. In September it seems strategic that we organize an NUL-UCDS Bucks County Committee (of only Bucks County residents) for two-way interpretation and advice.

It seems advisable also to set up a register of Negro job and home seekers. In September this might be begun through the proposed committee, and/or by a central convenient office. Mr. Clifford Moore's office might be used for Trenton but regardless of located office space in Trenton or in Bucks County, money for a part-time clerical worker should be provided. This worker would be trained by the NUL field representative to advise telephone and personal callers and secure information needed from them about their abilities and efforts to secure jobs or homes in the rapidly expanding Bucks County economy. Such a clerical worker would be available while the NUL field representative is out in the field.

List of Key Persons Contacted:

1. Mr. James L. Longkin, Business Manager, Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL (Philadelphia)
2. Mr. John O'Driscoll, Business Manager, Carpenters District Council, AFL (Philadelphia)
3. Mr. Harry Wagner (Carpenters Union) Labor Representative on Philadelphia FEPC
4. Mr. Matthews, Manager, Bristol Office, Pennsylvania State Employment Service

2. Mr. Alvin J. Lucie, prominent (Morrisville) Bucks County resident
6. Mr. and Mrs. W. E. McGruder, (Bristol and Croydon, Pa.) Bucks County residents - Mrs. McGruder is member of B.G. Mason Relations Council
7. Mr. Alfred Warner, Business Agent, United Steel Workers of America, Morrisville office
8. Mr. W. P. Orrick, Principal, Solebury School, New Hope, Pa.

and Mr. Granger - Mr. Moss
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Parris
Mr. Johnson
Miss Zennephill-Mr. Finley-Mr. Pope
Mr. Banner-Mr. Mason

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